Hellenic Pedagogical Cosmos

A Periodic Kaleidoscope on Education and Pedagogy in Hellas

‘FOLOI’
Hellenic Pedagogical Cosmos
A Periodic Kaleidoscope on Education and Pedagogy in Hellas

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Hellenic Pedagogical Cosmos (HPC) is an informative, rather unusual, periodical on educational and pedagogical issues and developments in contemporary Hellas. It is not an academic review in the traditional sense by which such reviews have become known throughout the international academic community. The format is different, the contents as a whole are presented differently. Notwithstanding this, HPC seeks, primarily, to serve the needs of all those Anglophones whose access to the esoteric educational atmosphere of Greece is limited due to the Greek language barrier. Throughout the contents of the periodical, the non-Greek speaking reader may find a number of highly synoptic presentations of a variety of educational and pedagogical themes from a wide spectrum of ‘originators’ (e.g. academics, researchers, teachers, parents, students, journalists, politicians, etc) that rarely cross Greek borders via the medium of a ‘foreign’ language. In that sense, the heterogeneous panorama of the synchronous Hellenic pedagogy analyzed in this ‘Cosmos’ may always be of both theoretical interest and practical use to all those involved in the field of education.

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Editor’s lexis

...and

=Equality of opportunity of access in Greek higher education
=The ‘International Hellenic University’
=Highlights from the data on Greek Education
=Private classes in Greece cost 2.6 billion euros
=Local priest teaches primary students
=The public school transportation system in Greece
=Impact of the financial crisis on Greek Higher Education
=Special education in Greece
=The Greek school and the European dimension issue
=From the Greek Community of Montreal: the “Socrates” (day school) era begins
=Investigating ‘the speaking time’ of classroom teachers
=Introducing the “Learning from my students’” motto...
=The case of second chance schools. An ethnographic study
=History of homework in primary education in Greece
=Years of teaching English in Greek youngsters
=U.S. Program in Greece helps refugees become students again

The central theme of this issue: “Imagine/ see/ think of yourself being (still) a practicing classroom teacher 20 -25 - 30 years down the road

=Improving education and training will boost growth and productivity in Greece
=On the crucial issue of accountability in the Greek education system
=Educational reform in Greece: Central concepts and a critique.
=Masked Attackers Storm Greek University Lecture
=Six Greek Universities Rank Among World’s Top 500
=Education for a Bright Future in Greece
=EU criticizes Greek education
=One in three feels bullied at Greek schools
=The Emergence of Adult Education in Greece

The valuable assistance of “Nea Ekpaideftiria – G. Malliara” in realizing this HPC publication is greatly appreciated

(“Greek Reporter” has been used as the source for several news items published in this issue)
Matoula Tomara-Sideris

Benefaction in Modern Greece -Theory and History

The communities of the Hellenic diaspora have been the cradle of Modern Greek benefaction. Eminent entrepreneurs acting as benefactors undertake works of common interest, substituting for the official state, collectivities and institutions. The benefactor realises a personal epopee in the service of the common good. Benefaction for him represents a defining passion determining his/her personal and collective functioning.

Benefaction as historical phenomenon continues today, mainly in the form of institutional benefaction.

History, ideology, personal and social mechanisms underlying the practice of benefaction are thoroughly analysed in the frame of the theory that benefactors represent organic intellectuals of the bourgeoisie during the age of its historical ascendancy as well as in the present era of its world hegemony.
Editor’s Lexis

| EDASES, presents itself as a kind of entirely “new” approach to everyday schooling across different socio-cultural contexts by trying to combine the well-known “attributes” or “characteristics” of Empathy, Dialogue, Adaptability, Sociability, Exploration and Synthesis in a unified teaching/learning method. As a first step of introducing EDASES via the HPC, a telegraphic “definition” of each of those characteristics follow (as described in the respective sections of wikipedia). More elaborate presentations of this EDASES “newly attempted -and in the process of development- teaching/learning method” are scheduled to be presented soon in several public fora within and outside Greece. No doubt, all these six well-known and widely accepted characteristics comprising EDASES in the education field in general and the daily schooling of all children in particular, may legitimately claim both immediate relevance and direct usefulness for all practicing classroom teachers and their students alike. |

**Empathy**

**Dialogue**

**Adaptability**

**Sociability**

**Exploration**

**Synthesis**

**EDASES**

Empathy, is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference, i.e., the capacity to place oneself in another's position. There are many definitions for empathy that encompass a broad range of emotional states. Types of empathy include cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, and somatic empathy.

Dialogue, is a written or spoken conversational exchange between two or more people, and a literary and theatrical form that depicts such an exchange. As a narrative, philosophical or didactic device, it is chiefly associated in the West with the Socratic dialogue as developed by Plato, but antecedents are also found in other traditions including Indian literature. Educators such as Freire and Ramón Flecha have also developed a body of theory and techniques for using egalitarian dialogue as a pedagogical tool.
Adaptability, is a feature of a system or of a process. This word has been put to use as a specialised term in different disciplines and in business operations. Word definitions of adaptability as a specialised term differ little from dictionary definitions. According to Andresen and Gronau adaptability in the field of organizational management can in general be seen as an ability to change something or oneself to fit to occurring changes. In ecology, adaptability has been described as the ability to cope with unexpected disturbances in the environment.

Sociability, is a personality trait, the ability to be fond of the company of others, people who are sociable are inclined to seek out the opportunity of social contact with others. What helps children engage in learning? According to studies on the social nature of how we acquire knowledge, one answer is clear: Children learn to engage in life through their natural capacity to interact with others. We often call this sociability, and we recognize it in children when we observe their enjoyment of being together—chatting, joking, laughing, working, and creating friendships. It is through these interactions that kids make the invisible visible, cross boundaries into new spheres of learning, and initiate thoughts and feelings that help them chart pathways through life.

Exploration, is the act of searching for the purpose of discovery of information or resources. Exploration occurs in all non-sessile animal species, including humans. In scientific research, exploration is one of three purposes of empirical research (the other two being description and explanation). The term is often used metaphorically.

Synthesis, is the method/process for solving the conflict between the thesis and antithesis by reconciling their common truths, and forming a new proposition. Intellectual synthesis is a broad term describing scholarly endeavors meant to unify and fuse a large amount of information into a single integrated body of knowledge. Commonly, intellectual synthesis occurs as an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary academic effort by one or more scholars.

Athens, May 2018

Leonidas C. Bombas
Comparative Educationalist
Director of Studies, “Nea Ekpaideftiria - G. Malliara”
Equality of opportunity of access in higher education

In Greece, the issue (of equality of opportunity of access in higher education) appeared for the first time in 1964, when the government introduced a comprehensive set of reform policies geared to promote a more democratic system of higher education. Until 1964 the basic characteristics of the Greek system of higher education, in relation to the issues discussed here, were: a) the concentration of institutions of higher education in the two major cities of Athens and Thessaloniki; b) the increasing demand for higher education; c) the geographical centralization of the entrance examinations system (in the locus of the schools of higher education); and d) decentralized decision making on the content of the entrance examinations by professors in the corresponding schools of higher education.

The direct results of these characteristics were: a) the concentration of *frontistiria* (a kind of private prep school) in the two major cities; b) countrywide migration of applicants for universities places to the two major cities to attend the *frontistiria* and participate in the entrance examinations; c) continuous increase in the ‘difficulty’ of the entrance examination questions, an easy answer to the increasing number of applicants; d) attendance in the *frontistiria* lengthened from two to four years as a result of increasingly difficult exams; e) a tendency among university applicants to participate twice or more in the entrance examinations.

These developments resulted before 1964 in an obvious inequality in student access to higher education depending on socioeconomic background. For one thing, access in the exams, directly associated with *frontistiria* attendance, required many students to live in the Athens or Thessaloniki area for almost two years before finishing high school. Furthermore, in the case of failure in the first try, this meant another year or more of full-time *frontistiria* attendance. The direct costs involved and the income forgone by those persisting until final success required an economic outlay that strained the resources of many families.
The educational reform of 1964 included specific policies focusing on the democratization of the higher education system. They were: a) the ‘free education for all’ measure which meant the abolition of all university fees for students; b) increase in the number of students; c) change in the system of the entrance examinations, that is, centralized design of exams by field of study (at the high school level) and decentralized administration of exams by small geographical regions; and d) decentralization of new schools and new universities throughout the country. The main focus of the reform policies was to make higher education more accessible to students of wider socioeconomic groups coming from all regions of the country.

...It is clear that the impact of the reform very definitely reduced the inequality of access to higher education immediately after the reform. However, it has failed to promote sustained change by keeping the equality of opportunity at the 1969 levels. It rather tends to regress to the situation before the reform when one considers the whole country.

...The conclusion, therefore, is that the specific reforms have not been sufficient to achieve a large-scale sustained change toward more equality of opportunity. They have succeeded, however, in introducing a considerable change, concerning the school (National Technical University) and the field of study (technology) which used to discriminate the most. The introduction of reforms, not the specific reforms themselves, has affected the whole higher education system for a short period of time. On the other hand, the lack of overall sustained change in the opportunity of access of diverse socioeconomic groups of students leads me to conclude that the entrance examination reform needs to be completed.

(M. Polydorides, 1978)
New synergies, new promises and new enthusiasm in the horizon

What has happened ever since? Does anyone (official or not) know the “whereabouts” of this “new synergy/promise” that was in the making (exactly) a full decade ago? No doubt, it would be interesting to find out the “pertinent details” of this very creative/useful endeavor...

The ‘International University’ opens its doors in 2008

The ‘International Hellenic University’ is ready to welcome its first foreign students by this coming February of 2008, thus occupying its own –important, according to the expectations of those responsible for the initiative- place, within the overall global map of higher education institutions. At this newly established Anglophone university students are expected to come from all around the world, its teaching staff are to come from the international academic community, whereas its degrees/diplomas will be of equal status with those awarded by world acclaimed institutions of tertiary education. During this initial stage of operation –a transitory pilot operation- only graduate level programs of study have been put in place until its full development in terms of building facilities as well as far as its organization and the hiring of personnel are concerned.

Friday, November 16 has been declared as the official ‘open day’ for the University with respective ceremonial events in Athens (Greece), Constantinoupolis (Turkey) and Sofia (Bulgaria), presenting the first graduate course of studies, an ‘Executive MBA’ in Business Management and Finance. Additional graduate programs in Finance, Bank related Studies, and in Humanities have been scheduled for September 2008.

At the beginning, the main objective of this institution is to attract academics and students from South-Eastern Europe, the ‘Greek Diaspora’ (Apodimos Ellinismos) and citizens from all around the globe seeking undergraduate and graduate degrees through its three faculties: Economics and Business Management, Humanities and Technological Sciences.

“It has been called a ‘University of the Businessmen’ but it is, definitely, a public university, the operation of which is prescribed in the Law 3391/2005” in order to offer specialization in Economic and Business Education.
Combining mystery and rhetorical hordes

Changing the education system: Few people will disagree that the Greek education system is a mess. It is a completely outdated system that is totally divorced from society’s real needs. In fact, the system appears to be designed in such a way as to serve the needs of all the players involved in the broader process: the pupils, the parents, the teachers and, basically, anyone who makes a living out of the very system. Needless to say, there is very little, if any, meritocracy involved. We should not be fooled by the spectacular performance of individual pupils or university students. Every education model has its exceptions and its own ways of rewarding the most talented or excellent members out there – many of whom, after all, attend private schools or have a private school background.

Private schools educate some 6-7 percent of Greek students but the objective is to raise the standards of public education. The goal is to improve the average standards and performance of pupils which, as a number of international surveys have demonstrated, remain extremely low. Greek pupils show particular difficulty with mathematics and reading comprehension. Observers who say that the root of these woes is in secondary education appear to be right. If the past is any guide, the distance between intentions and deeds is vast, especially in this country. One can never be sure of the final result after all the usual exceptions and compromises designed to keep everyone happy.

The Greek education minister must be determined to break some eggs if he wants to see progress. The examinations that pupils would have to pass in order to graduate from high school into senior high ought to be tough, not merely cosmetic. Meanwhile senior high schools should be staffed with top-of-the-class teachers and these need to be protected against the demands of pupils or teachers seeking preferential treatment. The school curriculum must promote critical thinking, not sterile memorizing, and so on. More important, reforming the process will not achieve much without a similar change in mentality. And this is the greatest wager of all. Source: ekathimerini.gr
**Highlights from the data on Greek Education:**

- The share of low achievers in science, mathematics and reading as measured by PISA 2015 is above EU average and particularly high among students with a migrant background. Gender and socioeconomic status strongly affect student performance.
- The tertiary attainment rate is high, but the employment rate of recent graduates remains low and macro-economic skills mismatches persist, leading to a significant outflow of highly skilled people.
- New policy measures aim at strengthening the quality of school education, but efforts to achieve greater autonomy and efficiency appear insufficient.
- Greece is making important efforts to provide education to refugee children, but numerous challenges remain with regard to their integration into mainstream education.
- The reform of vocational education and training is progressing, but there is scope to further increase its attractiveness and boost participation. Tackling inequalities and promoting inclusion Poor educational outcomes are a matter of concern.

The results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015 show that the particularly high share of low achievers in mathematics remained practically unchanged at 35.8% in 2015. In science, 32.7% of 15-year-olds were low achievers, an increase of 7.2 pps. since 2012. The rate of low achievers in reading increased by 4.7 pps. to 27.3%. Wide performance gaps exist between different social groups. Gender differences are especially pronounced in reading, where girls outperform boys by 14.9 pps. The share of low achievers among foreign-born students is particularly high, notably in science (57.9%) – there is a wide performance gap of 21.4 pps. between native and foreign-born students. There are also questions of equity in the very high concentration of low achievers in science within the lowest quartile of the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (49.8%) which is 35.1 pps. higher than among the top quartile.

Another concern is the comparatively low share (18%) of resilient students — i.e. those coming from the bottom socioeconomic quartile who perform at high levels when compared with students of the same socioeconomic status from around the world. Early school leaving has reduced further, yet differences between native and foreignborn population are significant. Early school leaving decreased by 1.7 pps. in 2016 and is, at
6.2 %, among the lowest in the EU, well below the national Europe 2020 target of 10 %. While the gender gap is small (1.8 pps.), differences between regions and between native and foreign-born students are pronounced.

Among foreign-born students early school leaving has more than halved since 2012, but remains, at 18.1 %, more than triple that of native-born students (5.5 %). School dropout rates vary according to school type and region. A large share of the migrant student population enters vocational education and training (VET), the sector marked by the highest school dropout rate (11 %) according to data collected by the Institute of Educational Policy’s (IEP) school dropout observatory (see figure 2.). Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, a region with significant minority and migrant populations, records the highest dropout rates in the country.

**Education and Training Monitor 2017 Greece**


Major demographic changes will affect the education system at all levels. By 2050 Greece’s population is expected to have fallen by 14.5 % compared to today. The median age is estimated to rise from 43.4 to 52.8, 5 years more than the projected EU average (VID 2016). Within the next 10 years the number of children aged 5 (starting age for compulsory schooling) is expected to decrease by 27 %. In the same period, the share of school children aged 7-14 will decrease by more than 17 %. While by 2027 a slight increase is estimated for those finishing compulsory education and potentially entering VET, post-secondary or tertiary education (age group 15-19), over a 20 year horizon a 23 % decrease compared to 2017 is projected. These projections highlight both challenges and opportunities for rationalisation at different levels and adapting to the changing composition of society including through provision of lifelong learning opportunities.
An eclectic autopsy of authentic data at random

The public school transportation system in Greece

Numbers and legislative framework In Greece, 12,000 itineraries are executed daily by buses and public transport, a great majority of which are double (morning and afternoon hours). These itineraries serve 215,000 students attending public schools aged 6 to 18 years old. Approximately, 7,000 private contracts with transport operators are signed every year and the annual cost is estimated at 150,000,000€. Students of Primary and Secondary public schools are entitled to free transfer from their residents to school units and vice versa. Responsible for that are the Central Regions (Joint Ministerial Decision, 2013), which provide students with special student bulletins free of charge, if the distance from the residence to the school unit is over 1.2 km for primary school students, over 2.5 km for high school students aged 12-15 and over 4.0 km for high school students, aged 16-18.

Additionally, the Central Regions sign public service contracts with private companies in order to serve primary school students living in a distance over 1.2 km from their school unit. The corresponding distances for high school students aged 12-15 and 16-18 are 3.0 km and 5.0 km respectively. All the above, require that the students are enrolled in a school unit in accordance with the spatial distribution of the relevant Primary and Secondary Education Directorates of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs.

The school transportation services are provided either by the existing public transport system (urban/interurban buses with special bulletins free of charge), or by Central Regions (CR) owned vehicles compensated by 65% of the total amount (based on a mathematic formula). If the school transportation is impossible regarding the previous conditions, then the CR proceed and sign services agreements with private transport companies under public bidding processes. In the case where the provision of school transportation is impossible or financially disadvantageous according to the previous provisions mentioned above, students are granted with a monthly allowance of 85€ if they choose to move to another residence closer to the school unit with an ultimate scope of attending it.
Syndromes of lethargy and apocalypses of our schooling in Greece today

Education for a Bright Future in Greece

An OECD report on Greece’s education system presented has called for more autonomy for schools and evaluation of teaching staff. The report titled *Education for a Bright Future in Greece*, says that due to the economic crisis, the Greek education system has suffered a series of cuts in public spending, a decline of close to 36 percent in nominal terms over the past decade.

In addition, the recruitment freeze and the hiring of new teachers on short-term contracts has affected the quality of schools and the education system as a whole.

The report notes that the Greek education system is facing several structural challenges, including a high proportion of substitute teachers, a highly centralized school system, the need for better professional development support for teachers, the effects of widespread shadow education and weaknesses in tertiary education.

“Building on international best practices, reforms should consider more autonomy for schools and school principals, a solid accountability framework, and a culture based on evaluation,” said Gabriela Ramos, OECD Chief of Staff and Head of the OECD-Greece Joint Steering Committee.

“Now that Greece’s economic prospects are improving, it is time to centre attention on building a highly performing education system that puts children at its centre. Greece can turn its education system into the dynamo of a more inclusive and sustainable growth,” she added.
Greek Students Create ‘Unbeatable’ Chess Robot: Greek students have created an automated system with artificial intelligence algorithms they claim is unbeatable at chess. Cronus is the creation of Hyperion Robotics team at the University of Western Macedonia. It consists of a robotic arm that makes all the moves on the chessboard, even pressing the timer and a computer that controls artificial intelligence algorithms not only to develop the game but also to move the arm on the board.

“Cronus does not offer the same charm as playing against another human being, his chance of making a mistake or being beaten is zero,” 20-year-old Vassilis Tzikas member of the team is quoted as saying by the Athens News Agency. He adds that “we wanted to prove that under certain conditions robots are better than humans even though they are created by them.”

The idea about creating Cronus started with the Dean of the Polytechnic School; Professor Theodoros Theodoulides, a talented chess player, who kept asking his students whether they could give “life” to a forgotten arm in the warehouse of the lab and make it play chess. “The third time he asked, we looked at each other and said why not. No one has tried it in Greece, we will do it,” says Tzikas. It took four months of hard work to get Cronus working.

The team has now set a new goal: to improve Cronus’ response time and program it to play on three chess boards simultaneously. Lecturer Minas Dassygenis said that the most important element in completing the project was that students, in addition to research and intensive work, “used their imagination” to respond to problems.
Greek parents spend 3 billion euros annually for education:

Free public education in Greece? Not really. Not in real Greek life. Greek family expenditures for educational purposes exceed 3 billion euros annually, according to an annual report by the GSEE private sector employees federation published on Wednesday. GSEE’s Center of Educational Policy Development said that despite the availability of free public education, parents pay for university entrance preparation schools, foreign language schools, art or computer classes, and studying in cities other than the family residence. According to the center’s latest data (from 2015), private school tuition and fees take the lion’s share of all educational expenditures (792,331,939 euros), followed by foreign language schools (621,164,425 euros) and transfers of funds for college students studying in cities away from home (554,681,971 euros).

If expenses for private lessons to augment school studies or prepare for exams, as well as and university prep schools ("frondistiria"), are added together, CEPD said, the cost totals 753,633,197 euros. Additional expenses include the purchase of textbooks and materials for art (176 million) and computers (184 million). The crisis does not appear to have affected expenditures for education in Greek families, according to 2015 data. Although parents reduced expenses for babysitters, preschool teachers and other coach-related specialists by 50 pct, book and desk supplies by 35 pct and transfers of funds domestically by 33 pct, expenses for frondistiria were reduced by 1.1 pct at most, within the years 2013 to 2015.

In 2015, total education expenditures came to 8.8 billion euros, with 5.5 billion (or 62.8 pct) allocated to public education and 3.3 billion (37.2 pct) to private education. To this is added another estimated 1.3 billion euros, from expenditures for frondistiria, private lessons, language learning, babysitters and other specialists taking care of children, the center said.
Local priest in Tzoumerka, Greece teaches primary students
A local priest has taken on the role of a teacher at the primary school of Matsouki village, in Tzoumerka, Epirus, as the school has been left without a proper teacher for several days now.

Despite the efforts made by Tzoumerka’s local authorities to bring in a new school teacher to the village’s primary school, the long duration of the replenishment process from the central government, has driven the local priest to undertake teaching duties, in order to cover the needs of the young students.

Parents at Matsouki confirm that they are not aware if and when a new teacher will come to the local school and fear that the delay of the notorious ‘Greek bureaucracy’ will have negative effects on their children’s education.

The primary school of Matsouki has only three pupils, and one of them happens to be the local priest’s son; who without hesitation and because of the lack of a teacher, decided to enter the classroom and teach grammar, mathematics and history.

His efforts, of course, are not easy. The priest does not aspire to become a teacher, but only wishes to keep the children in school and in touch with their natural environment for several hours every morning, so that they do not have to be at home and spend all their time unproductively in front of a television set or a computer screen.

Although the priest’s initiative is admirable, it is not the proper solution for the problem. It is moreover, very hard for the young pupils to move to a different school in Pramanta village; which is a 45-minute walk from Matsouki. Especially during the winter, the path to the nearest village is covered with snow and is not accessible.

It is so far unknown when a new school teacher will be finally appointed and events like this revive moments from a distant past, when education was an unapproachable good; available only to a few.
Euphemisms in the agora of education

Impact of the financial crisis on Greek Higher Education as described four year ago: The “picture” remains (still) the same today – if not worst - in May 2018: The current economic and political situation in Greece has made its mark on every aspect of Greek society. Education could not be an exception to the rule. According to the published data on the 2014 budget, funding for the Ministry of Education for the coming year stands at a total of 4.587.329.000 Euros, down by 8.1%, corresponding to a net reduction of 400 million Euros.

Out of this budget, 876.873.000 Euros are allotted to Tertiary education and approximately less than 30% of it is investments in infrastructure, equipment and research. The numbers are significantly reduced from 2012; total funds were one billion Euros and earmarked funding for investments and research was higher by 40%.

The challenges are many and diverse, and the crisis’ effects make the situation more difficult to improve. More specifically, the main obstacles that Greek universities and schools face are the following:

- Significant reductions in funding that affect university research, graduate stipends, investments and infrastructures. The prolonged crisis compounds these effects limiting graduate funding and research, and stifling investments.
- Reductions in personnel and administrative staff make the running of universities even more taxing. The bulk will not be replaced due to budget restrictions. It also means increased teaching time for faculties, leaving less time for academic collaboration and research.
- Tense political atmosphere in and around the educational sector that diverts focus from academic targets. Recently, staff and faculty at the University of Athens were unable to offer classes because of prolonged strikes.
• The general absence of evaluation and appraisal procedures both on a country, institutional level or even department level, the lack of standardization of best practices and the extreme introversion of the system, make Greece a lagging competitor in FT foreign faculty, visiting professors and international students.

However, focusing on the negatives will not help us understand what the strong points of Greek tertiary education are. Any potential solution to the long standing issues faced, will require us to look at the positives and best practices as well.

• Greek university students, despite the institutional shortcomings are generally hard working and have a deep appreciation for education and a solid secondary education background.

• Furthermore after 30 years in the EU, a new generation of well-educated faculty, with increasing foreign exposure, initiatives and a very active mind-set is slowly taking charge.

• A strong tradition and a cultural legacy offer Greece unique advantages, especially when it comes to subjects such as the Classics, Linguistics, Philosophy and Mathematics.

Many issues are at hand and coordinated effort is required to change the direction of the sector. However, the strong EU framework, the strong Greek belief in the value of education and the general demand for reform, offer an opportunity to bring about necessary changes sooner rather than later.
Special education in Greece

The development of the Greek special education system started in 1969, with the first special schools for mentally handicapped children. In 1985, an integration policy was implemented by the foundation of special classes in mainstream primary schools. The outcomes are described in the bulletin of the Directorate of Special Education within the Ministry of Education. Integration has been supported by European programmes such as HELIOS I and HELIOS II. Teachers’ qualifications are considered to be of a good standard. Teachers’ education lasts 4 years and takes place at the Education Departments of the Greek Universities. It includes courses on special education. The Athens University Maras lion Institute retrains primary school teachers for 2 years, preparing them to be specialists in teaching pupils with special needs. The recent Law 2817 (14/3/2000) promotes the inclusion of secondary schools teachers in these post-graduate courses, so that students will have the appropriate support at any stage of their education. The Greek Ministry of Education has recently introduced a project aimed at equipping all the special education units with ICT hardware (computers with multimedia system, printers). Connection to the internet provides the opportunity for communication between schools and access to a central bank of information (DATA BANK OF THE DIRECTORATE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION). This project is an initiative of the Directorate of Special Education of the Greek Ministry of Education, monitored by the Directorate itself, whilst it has been technically implemented by the National Technical University of Athens. This ICT system is at a piloting stage of function and after the final evaluation of the project (December 2000) will be accessible to: teachers, specialists, parents, people (December 2000). The DATA BANK, at the moment, contains educational programmes, pedagogical games, a bibliography, articles and information on recent developments in special education. In order to fulfil its educational role, the DATA BANK will soon be enriched with a wide range of software, designed to promote teaching and learning activities in special education. The implementation of SEN and ICT policy is the responsibility of the Greek Ministry of Education following the proposals of the Greek Pedagogical Institute. The
Directorate of Special Education within the Greek Ministry of Education monitors the provision and the function of ICT systems. The evaluation department of the Pedagogical Institute undertakes the evaluation of the system. The SEN policy is also monitored by the Greek Ministry of Education and evaluated by the Pedagogical Institute as far as books and programmes are concerned.

The Greek Ministry of Education has two networks to support teachers using ICT. The first one (as described in the policy section) will cover all special education units with up-to-date hardware connected to the DATA BANK OF THE DIRECTORATE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION: There is also at least one teacher at each unit, trained to use ICT. The second one exists within the Greek Pedagogical Institute: Both websites have some information in English as well as in Greek. Schools have their websites. Greek teachers are practically supported in using ICT through seminars, organized by the National Technical University of Athens and by the Information and Communication Technology Centre at the Pedagogical Institute. A main source of information is via their respective websites. The strength of the present support structure is that there is a high number of personnel within the Information and Communication Technology sector. However, the weaknesses of the current system are: - the centralization of services within the capital city of Athens - the limited number of distance learning programmes. The main barrier to teachers using ICT with SENs students is the difficulty they have in using the internet as there is limited information in electronic form associated with Greek education. In addition, there is still relatively limited software on special education issues. Nevertheless, the Directorate of Special Needs Education of the Ministry of Education has recruited a number of researchers in the SEN field for the development of material appropriate to meet specific teaching and learning needs. The target is to implement effectively the short-term plan for distance learning delivered by the DATA BANK and enrich the ‘learning tools’ available to all Greek schools. The Greek Pedagogical Institute also supports Greek teachers and SEN students in using ICT through programmes promoting distance learning education. In Greece, it appears to be the case that the younger the teacher, the more interest he or she has to get information to support SEN students using ICT. One reason could be that they are also more proficient in the English language and are able to get information via the internet.

Source: National Ministry of Education & Religious Affairs
Syndromes of lethargy and apocalypses in an agonizing marathon for our schooling

The Greek school and the European dimension issue

There is no doubt, whatsoever, that Greek students—as most likely many other youngsters all over the EU—have come to realize the ‘dual’ status of Greece both as an independent state and as a member state of the EU. This relatively recent realization appears to gain more and more momentum among the younger generations, even if their formal schooling continues to somehow evade and/or ignore all profound developments at a European level. Unfortunately, today’s Greek school does not provide its students with this much-needed (and wanted) information about Europe. It is, perhaps, a bit too extreme to resort to such comments nowadays, but one is tempted to remind himself of the traditionally arteriosclerotic nature of the Greek school resisting change and adaptability to contemporary demands and priorities.

Attempting an overall summary of the entire data collected in the course of this highly tentative study, one may stress the following findings in a point form:

Greek students seem to be aware and cognizant of the central and decisive role of the EU vis-à-vis the Greek society in its entirety and the education field in particular. The Greek government is expected to co-decide and co-operate with the EU in several important domains/activities of public life, including education and technology;

Reluctance and, occasionally, fears and anxieties appear to ‘color’ the attitudes and the feelings of the Greek youngsters with regard to their prospects and their future life within a Single European Market and within the EU, where a European citizenship is proposed for all member states’ citizens;

The students’ knowledge about EU related issues is not at a level desired or wished. The Greek school bears great responsibility for this apparent lack of adequate information and knowledge;

Today’s Greek schools should undergo several reforms and changes in their curricula so that they could be in a position to respond effectively and ‘narrow the information gap’ with respect to European dimension aspects and initiatives;
On the whole, it is clear that European dimension aspects are still ‘outside’ the formal education system and the daily functioning of today’s Greek schools. The students themselves express their interest in getting to know more about the European Union and they seem prepared to support a more active involvement of their school in European dimension related developments and activities.

Undoubtedly, future empirical research along similar lines, employing representative student population samples from all Greek schools and using more extensive and more sound methodological instruments, is in great need and urgency.

*(L. C. Bombas, 1994)*

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**Note:** It is true that, today, one may observe a considerable number of positive developments and a variety of concrete initiatives at both the level of state educational policies and the actual school praxis pertaining to issues and concerns related to what could called European dimension in education. There are specific school units across Greece which could legitimately claim an active and creative European involvement and innovative partnerships all over the EU in the framework of joint European projects and common endeavours in promoting European dimension parameters. Yet, on the whole, the fact of the matter remains that for the majority of classroom teachers and the daily school functioning in Greece, contemporary European issues and European Union developments have not ‘entered’ most school classrooms in a systematic and long-lasting way. For a variety of reasons which have to do both with objective but, mostly, with subjective attitudes and well-rooted mentalities/school practices, most ‘school walls’ do not allow such contemporary European realities to become permanent ‘residents and roommates’ in today’s Greek school. As some analysts have suggested in different occasions: “May be it is (also) a matter of time...
Bridging the metropolis of Hellenism with the Greeks in diaspora

From the Greek Community of Montreal: the “Socrates” (day school) era begins

Greece, or the so-called metropolitan center of Hellenism, was destined to play a catalytic role in the internal affairs of the Greek Community in Montreal. The overall political developments in the Greek socio-political arena and the intense polarization of the entire Greek nation along political lines could not leave untouched those of Greek descent residing in Montreal. The political dichotomy along the Liberals and Conservatives (or ‘Venizelists’ vs ‘Royalists’) policies with regard to the events of those years affecting Greece, instigated an analogous dynamic conflict among Montreal’s Greeks. The Greek Orthodox Community (“Koinotita”) was transformed to a convenient forum for the two opposing camps. The community membership identified itself with one or the other political camp and supported the community leaders accordingly.

The “Koinotita” of all Greeks in Montreal became the organization where the adherents to the Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos (‘Venizelists’) attacked, both verbally and physically at times, the other members adhering to the policies of King Constantinos (‘Royalists’), and vice versa. It is perhaps ironic, or may be symbolic according to some, that the Day School “Socrates” came into existence as a result of that fighting along political lines. Another reminder of the presence of politics into educational spheres in general.

Socrates enters the community scene

In June 1925 the community membership rivalry along political lines as discussed above, was split in two separate community units. The ‘Venizelists’ of the “Koinotita” along with their supporters in the Greek community at large turned their back to the rest of the membership and went on establishing their own “Koinotita” and their own Day School (Kolyvas 1967-68). Thus, “Socrates” school (the new day school) began its operation from 1925 onwards, while “Plato” school (the first Greek school in the Greek community of Montreal established in 1910) was still alive and operative by the ‘Royalists’ who, in turn, did not want to lose the battle within the Greek community at large.

On the 24th of March 1926, “by an Act of the National Assembly of the
Province of Quebec, the Hellenic Canadian Community of the Island of Montreal was established and the “Socrates” school and the “Holy Trinity” church were merged into the Community (Hellenic Community of Montreal 1981). The full name of school at that time was “Socrates Anglo-Greek School Inc.”. It was on July 16, 1926 that “Socrates” school acquires its legal status as an ethnic community institution.

Regrettable as it may be, there is no information available concerning the first years of the “Socrates” operation, the number of children attending the community school, the program of the school, and the different problems which most likely would have to be dealt with. There have been only sporadic oral accounts and some personal experiences among the community membership that would seem to offer some reminiscences of those highly divisive years, the “Socrates” school included. Incidents of resentment and hostility and intra-fighting among the Greek themselves at the time were rather commonly observed in many aspects of community life. Examples of such rivalry included insulting each other in public, forbidding the entrance of the ‘opponent’ to the “Kafenio” (coffee house), physically attacking members of the other political camp, even not talking to relatives who happened to be on the other side of the Greek political spectrum.

L.C.Bombas(1988)

Note: “Socrates”, which continues to operate today in Montreal, Quebec, is a day trilingual (French, Greek, English) Greek community school, subsidized to a large extent by the Quebec Government, while the parents of pupils attending the school have also to pay some annual fee. This day community school has a history of a little less than a century in Montreal. Well up to the early 1980’s, “Socrates” was the only such educational arrangement all over the Greek Diaspora. The establishment of yet another day trilingual school (“Demosthenes”) by the neighbouring Greek Orthodox Community of Laval (Quebec) and, several years later, of additional day (bilingual) school in Toronto (Ontario) by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Toronto/Canada, has somehow ‘broken the monopoly’ of “Socrates” for such Greek schooling among Canada’s Greeks.
An eclectic autopsy of autonomous data at random

Investigating ‘the speaking time’ of classroom teachers

It seems that the results of most recent studies concerning the time that the teacher speaks in his classroom teaching his students, a parameter that is considered very important for effective teaching, are quite encouraging. The reduction of the time that the classroom teacher speaks while presenting the new subject/phenomena or when asking his students questions, providing further explanations or giving concrete examples, when answering his students’ questions or giving instructions in the classroom has been correlated with the effective differentiation of the teaching, through which the active participation and the learning of all students of mixed abilities classrooms are maximized.

Based on the findings of this research, it appears that 69.6% of classroom teachers use between 1 and 10 minutes of the teaching time prescribed in the weekly program to present the new subject/phenomena and questions, whereas another percentage of 15.2% of the teachers use 11-20 minutes. These particular findings – especially so those findings with regard to the presentation of the new subject and the questions posed to students - seem to be partially in accordance with other findings concerning the teaching method of eliciting knowledge from the students by the teachers, a method that continues to be of limited use in most school classrooms.

Thus, 39.4% of the teachers questioned do not use the method of eliciting, while another percentage of 36.4% of teachers use that specific teaching method to some degree. This teaching method is used (“enough” or “much”) by 24.2% of the teachers who did take part in the study, a finding that –according to the researchers- constitutes a strong indication that the ‘way of teaching’ should be changed to such teaching methods that are student-centred/oriented.

The results are more encouraging when it comes to the time that the classroom teacher spends in explaining, in giving instructions and examples to his students, as well as when he provides answers to his students’ questions. The total didactic time spent by the teacher in the fore-mentioned classroom activities is less than 10 minutes for all teachers of the sample population, with a large percentage of 54.5%-56.3% placing themselves under the 5 minutes level.
Introducing the “Learning from my students” moto...

When any teacher asked to provide a detailed account of his daily work in the school and his classroom in particular, there is no doubt that one of the main and most common ‘ingredients’ of his school work to be mentioned will center around a well-known aspect of institutionalized learning that is so eloquently epitomized in the phrase “I learn from my students”. Regardless of whether such a publicly voiced statement by virtually all the school teaching profession world-wide bears a linear correspondence to the everyday reality within school environments, the fact of the matter remains that students –to a lesser or greater extent= may legitimately claim for themselves an ‘unofficial’ or ‘undeclared’ or ‘atyypical’ role which, when carefully analyzed in its components, clearly ‘simulates’ the widely accepted/defined role of the classroom teacher.

Certainly, such an approach concerning learning on the part of the teacher via his constant and dynamic interaction with his students dates back in Greek antiquity, with Socrates and his students/disciples/followers serving as the most indicative example in this respect. Furthermore, similar arguments along these lines may be made with regard to the theorizing and the writings of all great educationalists and pedagogues throughout the centuries. The “learning from my students” moto, both as an absolutely imperative prerequisite and –at the same time= as a perennial daily objective to be achieved by the professionally conscientious teacher has been at the very ‘heart’ of the colossal educational and pedagogical heritage of ours.

Yet, to be fair, although the pertinent voluminous literature across the globe with its continuously cataclysmic production in the form of theories and empirical research does in fact deal with this ‘type of learning’ on many occasions, to our view, such a dealing is only peripheral, fragmentary and quite far from being integrated and complete. In other words, one barely sees –if and when- extensive and all-encompassing approaches/analyses which go into considerable depth in trying to ‘expose’ this type of daily teacher’s learning and thereby to understand all related parameters of this very crucial ‘learning phenomenon’.

Having said all the above as a kind of introductory commentary within the framework of the “central theme” of the issue of the HPC, it
should be (also) reminded that the vast majority of the teachers themselves, when given the opportunity and the forum to do so, eagerly and honestly unfold their existential experiences/feelings – even on paper – concerning their daily learning with/from their students. And, in short, this is what these good colleagues of mine are so vividly doing in the next few pages that follow. A very interesting and highly illuminating panorama of different personal ‘confessions’ of classroom teachers are readily at the disposal of the interested reader, through this aspiring endeavor of bringing to the forefront the “learning from my students” agenda.

L.C.B.

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“The picture of the school teacher in the daily Athenian press”
By: Doka, Aglaia

Which the picture of the Greek teacher as depicted in the daily Athenian press? How does this daily press present the personality, the work and the professional demands/claims of contemporary Greek teachers? Which are the educational topics and issues that are presented via the press? Do these daily news papers concern themselves, mostly, with the positive or the negative aspects of the school teacher and the education in general? Does the press, on purpose, highlight the negative aspects or it depicts things as they really are in education? Do these media agencies play a central key-role as socializing and intermediate mechanisms in the formation of a general perception in society for educational ‘happenings’ and developments?
Cultural pluralism in our xenophobic cosmos: contemporary philanthropists and stoics... in action

U.S. Program in Greece helps refugees become students again

Junaid Baloch, 21, almost gave up on his dream of studying political science when he left Pakistan two years ago. But today he and other refugees from South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa are attending new courses here at Deree College, a division of the American College of Greece, in the hope of earning a degree. “When I came into the building on orientation day, I felt like I found myself again here,” Baloch said.

He fled Pakistan, he said, after the military kidnapped a friend of his who had organized student meetings to demand improvements at the University of Balochistan. Baloch had also organized the meetings, so he knew he was likely a target too. Today, he is taking a course titled “English for Academic Purposes” at Deree College at the American College of Greece under a program funded by the U.S. Embassy in Athens. The program, called Education Unites: From Camp to Campus, gives 200 scholarships to refugees so they can attend classes at one of three U.S.-affiliated colleges in Athens and Thessaloniki.

“The Education Unites program allows refugees for the first time to go back to the dream they’ve put off because for the last years they’ve been trying to survive,” said Kathleen Macdonell, a consultant who advises students in the program.

Macdonell is a retired high-school principal from Pennsylvania who came to Greece as a humanitarian volunteer in 2015 as the refugee crisis was reaching a peak. The United Nations refugee agency reported in early 2016 that more than one million people—mostly refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan—had arrived in Greece since the start of the previous year.
Schooling in the austerity chaos of today’s Hellas

History of homework in primary education in Greece

It is remarkable that there is no law relating to Education that directly mentions homework and the principles that govern it. However, the existence and function of homework is inferred from direct references to Presidential Decrees that rule elementary pupil assessment and from the teachers’ manuals of various subjects where teaching guidelines are given by the Pedagogical institute. In the Presidential Decree 8/94, article 2, on the process of assessment, it is mentioned: ‘The appraisal of a primary school pupil is undertaken by his/her teacher of teachers and it is based on: a)…, b)…, c)..., the results of homework the pupil accomplishes in school or at home. During the first term, each pupil of the last two Grades undertakes the designing and elaboration of at least one project work on any topic they like, under their teacher’s guidance. The project works, the topics of which are recorded in a special book, are introduced by pupils in the classroom during the special activity day(s) of the class or the school’.

Even in the teachers’ manuals of some subjects concerning Grade 4 there is indicative reference:

The Christian Way Grade 4, OEDB, 1994

“Apart from the themes for discussion, the rest of activities, if there is no available time, can be given for homework. We can also assign them to read the Christ-centered text, not to learn it by heart, but to obtain some elements of it that will enable them to render the gist of the lesson, to answer questions, to discuss and link the old and the new in the next lesson.” (page 9)

b. Mathematics, Grade 4, OEDB, 1994

The teachers, judicially, can give their pupils a small number of exercises or a couple of problems for homework after they are given some explanations and instructions about their solution. However, the majority of them and mainly the ones with particular difficulties must be done by the pupils and under the teacher’s guidance in the classroom.” (pp. 11,12)

c. The Word and Us, Grade 4, 1994
The mention in the workbook “there are still cases that pupils can be engaged with it at home.” (p. 14)

d. **History, Grade 4, 1994**

“It is useful for these activities to be done in the classroom... the completion and learning of the revision exercise is assigned for homework.” (page 21)

e. **Modern Greek Language, Grade 4, 1994**

“From the written exercises “I Write and Learn” there is one introducing *italics* and *correct spelling*. As such, it is written in the classroom and, if time is no available, at home on some dotted lines of the book and only there... as correct spelling they learn it at home, and the next day they write it in a special book for correct spelling after being dictated by the teacher.” (p. 1)

“The correct spelling of the words for the file card is learnt at home...” and

“At home children have to accomplish two things: a. to read the specific section of the lesson and b. to be trained to write the ‘I Write and Learn’ and the ‘Words for the file Card’ exercises in a way they are legible and correctly spelled.” (page 18)

Homework is customary from the age of 6. Pupils spend some hours for homework every single day as follows: Grade 1, 1-2 hours; Grade 2, 1-2 hours; Grade 3, 2-3 hours; Grade 4, 2-3 hours; Grade 5, 3-4 hours and Grade 6, 3-4 hours.

**Costas Kalaitzidis**, ELT NEWS, February 1999)
Amorphous pedagogical enigmas... with school neophytes

Educational reform in Greece: Central concepts and a critique.

"The case of Greece as the most recent neoliberal experiment can provide valuable insights not only about a generalized attack on the welfare state and the public good, but also about the radical changes in public education that are altering its public mission, vision, and goals. In this paper first we trace the educational landscape in Greece as it emerges both from the reform in primary and secondary education and from the new law 4009 on higher education.

The ongoing government discourse on education is shaped and constructed along the lines of a market-driven society and unapologetically espouses the neoliberal dogma that aims to convert education into training, universities into corporations, knowledge into a service or commodity, and students into clients. We further examine the official public discourse as illustrated in government documentation in an attempt to map out the marked shift from the university as a public good to the university as corporate entity, and highlight the particular ways in which this is done.

The new educational legislation sets the stage for an education where the individual will thrive through relentless competition, where collectivity is abolished, where only "useful" knowledge counts and where "quality" and "excellence" serve as the excuse for a corporate standardization of the university and the academic life and thought. Keywords. neoliberalism; Greece; crisis; higher education; education reform; curriculum; critical discourse analysis"

“Imagine/ see/ think of yourself being (still) a practicing classroom teacher 20 -25 - 30 years down the road

Although nobody may be certain as to what the future “holds/reserves” for him -both personally and professionally-at any point in time, it is, nonetheless, quite interesting -if not challenging for the present day “routine”- to attempt a tentative exploration along such lines. Who does not like (or wish…) to be able to have a first-hand and “reliable” picture of the future in general, of his own future in particular! In the final analysis, imagination and imagining is totally “free”; let alone constructive and useful -under, of course, the appropriate conditions and “prerequisites”…

Thus been the case in the present context of the so-called “central theme” of the HPC, let us advance this cursive discussion a little further by focusing on the classroom teacher and his own portraying of his future personal and professional “status” embarking upon his imagination and/or “foreseeing”. Within this vein of “argument”, as a matter of fact, this type of highly heuristic exercise would appear even more interesting if someone could “ask” the classroom teacher on how he “sees and/or imagines” his future as a practicing school teacher a couple of decades down the road.

The personal accounts by a number of classroom teachers in the form of synoptic depictions of the future that follow this introductory note, are quite illuminating on their merit. The teachers/writers, on the basis of their own personal and professional “repertoire” of the present, put their imagination at work and provide us with a future full of wishes, expectations, innovations, changes and hopes…

L.C.B.
“Seeing” myself in the future to “carry” more years on my back

Given the fact that this periodical review entitled HPC is primarily addressed to Greek and non-Greeks living outside Greece proper, it is useful, on the one hand, to address this audience in a personal tone/note but, on the other hand, I think that it is my obligation to write down in this context general thoughts and viewpoints concerning the Greek public education system, the particular characteristics/issues/themes of which I know “first hand”, since my wife works as a classroom teacher in public schools for 19 consecutive years. Thus, I will start from the later.

Within the framework of the plethora and the continuous losses in terms of salaries and most of their working rights experienced by Greek workers in virtually all fields/sectors of employment and affecting all age groups by the governmental measures taken/implemented over the last “last few years” -irrespective of specific government and/or political party in power- the wretchedness of all Greek teachers has fallen into secondary importance. And this has been so concerning their salaries, the number of years been unemployed, the relatively old age of their hiring (if and when there is such a hiring) by the Greek state education system, their teaching post/assignment in remote areas of the country without having the choice/opportunity for a transfer near their home/family, their mandatory working/teaching in 2-4 schools located in different geographical areas, the increase (twice) of their teaching working hours per week, the improper and lacking basic facilities school buildings, the frequent change of curricula, the closing down of many schools resulting in the increase of the number of pupils per classroom.

On the top of all those described above, the present government legislated a considerable increase in the number of working years needed for retirement, a “measure” which in the case of teachers is tragic. “Our teachers are old and badly paid. Half (49%) of all Greek primary education teachers are over 50 years of age, whereas only less than 1% of those in service are under 30 years of age”. A primary or a secondary education teacher is impossible BIOLOGICALLY to teach in an actual school classroom for a full of 40 consecutive years, been 62 years of age and above that age. And one should think/imagine that a classroom teacher may work in two different schools located in considerable distance one another. And that this teacher has been experiencing this tiring and exhausting daily “routine” for many years “touring” around several Greek islands, mountains and valleys.
In addition, the “new measure” demanding 30 hours per week of educational task/workload by each teacher in bad school conditions, in inadequate and poorly “cared” offices, in schools without libraries, reading rooms and lunch facilities, that very measure drives the good and creative classroom teacher way from the state/public school and at the same time it undermines the overall educational process/work.

All these “measures” if we hypothesize that have been taken and implemented having in mind the improvement of Greek Education in the overall framework of our (pursued) exit from the economic crisis, they might produce positive results only in case that there are the proper conditions at work.

In public education/schools these proper conditions do not exist. Obviously, not all public schools in Greece belong to this category. Certainly, one may point to exemptions, but the vast majority fall into this “problematic” description as portrayed above. The negative consequences of all those “measures” are to inflict an additional burden to most Greek families, since public schools will not be able to offer an adequate/effective education due to the physical and the economic penury of the teacher. The limited/low income of the family will be called -once again- upon to give the solution needed for the education of their children.

All these may sound tough and somewhat exaggerated remarks but they, definitely, constitute an integral part of the “harsh” truth. It is, however, a picture that I, personally, do not live/experience as a classroom teacher in a private school for the last 19 years. The solutions are there concerning many and different themes/issues. The existing organization ‘un-ties” your hand. Cooperation with colleagues and fellow teachers is given. In short, our common denominator for all of us in the school is the individual child/pupil and all our pupils and the pedagogical and educational fulfilling of their needs within a total school environment which is absolutely appropriate, dignified and reciprocal towards us/the teachers.

There is a specific point that I would like to stress. I will be in agreement with all those who object concerning the retiring age increase for classroom teachers. The actual school classroom with its daily un-elastic demands imposes limits in the endurance of the physical condition of every teacher, so that he may continue to be an adequate/effective teacher with dignity as his professional duty expects and demands from him. On the other hand, however, I oppose the early retirement. What needs to be carefully considered with regard to this theme is the number
of hours in the classroom. Perhaps it should be reconsidered the
decrease of the numbers of hours in the classroom as we are getting
older. Such a reconsidering would be healthier for all (young and old). Or,
at least, the primary education teacher having the same number of hours
in the classroom as his secondary education colleague, since there is a
discrepancy with less hours for secondary education teachers (in most
cases 3 hours less).

“Seeing” myself in the future to “carry” more years on my back I feel
that I will have a number of characteristics/elements which will give me
certainty and self-conviction for a “powerful and authoritative” presence in the classroom. I will be able to develop a lesson plan based
on each specific didactic goal that I will realize immediately. Thus, I will
decide which point/s of the lesson should constitute the focus of my
teaching without paying particular attention as to how my pupils are
going to be engaged and “involved” in the classroom processes. In this
way my lesson will easily acquire a structure having a beginning, middle
and an end, while I will be able to easily connect previous knowledge
with the new one and, most importantly, I will consolidate and I will
connect my lesson with future learning and I will make
associations/interconnections with other school subjects. I will state my
expectations with clarity as far as both the workload of my pupils and
their behavior are concerned, I will give clear and straightforward
instructions, I will find the “golden rule” between strictness and friendly
behavior. Adopting a clever approach in teaching and learning I will easily
and intelligently reach the phase of evaluation, not only of my own
teaching but that of my pupils as well.

These few words and many more are the “ammunition” for a teacher
who “carries” years in his back. But these same characteristics may also
be a big disadvantage if he thinks that everything may be achieved only
with the presence of all those characteristics/elements describe above.
The absolute or excessive certainty leads you to other pathways, if you
do not lean and come close to our young friends in the classroom. I drives
you against/opposite the school children and this is the worst. This
characteristic has even more value in our present-day era where empiricism by itself is not enough, if it is not a “good” empiricism. And
here come my big question: Will you be able, both physically and
mentally/cognitively, to cope and manage this future ‘state of affairs’?

Teaching necessitates phyche, it needs personality so that your
pupils/students may feel you and may come out from the educational
process richer in knowledge and better as humans (anthropoi). This is the
pre-condition. Older teachers do have personality but they also need to have willingness and courage in the actual classroom daily. That is why the official state should try hard to find the most appropriate solution.


Christos Kostarelos

Hellenic Federation of University Teachers' Associations (POSDEP) / Πανελλήνια Ομοσπονδία Συλλόγων Διδακτικού και Ερευνητικού Προσωπικού


Greece

The main aim of POSDEP since its establishment in 1989 has been to ensure that Greek governments will provide students with public, free university education and that the universities will be totally independent; fiscally, administratively, institutionally. POSDEP is mainly in contact with the Federation of Associations of Technical Institutions (OSEP-TEI) and the Union of Greek Researchers (E.E.E). They also have contacts with the Greek Federation of State School Teachers of Secondary Education (OLME) and the Greek Federation of State School Teachers of Primary Education (DOE) for subjects concerning the Education Law.
A new school year starts and the school bell reminds everyone the place that he should take in the school yard for the long-established “ritual” of Agiasmos (the blessing by the local priest of the entire school community for a good and creative school year). Among known faces and friendly looks I find the specific point/spot in which I should stand. It is my new class! My new pupils are waiting for me. They have already heard a lot about me from their siblings or from friends who have been my students in previous years. I salute them with the known “good morning of the teacher” and I lead them to the classroom where they have already left/placed their school “stuff”. The first day in school is unfolding itself and the same anxiety, the same AMIXANIA reigns me like the very first time I experienced this process. The so-called “time-healer/doctor” does not function therapeutically vis-à-vis the two feelings, regardless of the number of years passing by.

However, as the days will go by and this first feeling of anxiety will subside, the time of/for real work will come. The teaching material/syllabus of the specific grade being known to me, the preparation time at home will be devoted to new-fresh ideas that will go hand-by-hand with the priorities/paradigms/models and the needs of the era. The overall material to be taught will be -more or less- the same, but given the very fact that today’s children have so many pictures, stimuli and information available to them, it will be even more difficult to attract their interest and to impress them. Therefore, my experience as a teacher so far will be useless and what I should do is to try to see thought the eyes of my children/pupils. Thus, every time I will feel certain that what I do is the right thing or that I have tried/tested that technique/teaching practice many times in the past and, thus, it will work one more time, I should put a question mark. I should always think that there is something better. Only in this way I will stay active and effective. Casting doubt, therefore, and hard work irrespective of how many years will go by. Because this is what I chose when I decided to become a teacher. Never to lay idle and “relax”!

Our profession is a unique profession/job for many reasons. One of these reasons is that being a teacher gives you the opportunity/possibility to continuously meet and get to know new people. The teaching experience of many years may help in “reading”
much more easily the eyes of our pupils, but we are always ready for the surprise which will add something new to all those that we knew up to that day. This means/implies that always walking into our known pathways, that very “routine” of ours does not (as such) secures the pursued success in our work.

The years that I spend as a pupil in primary school are the years that I remember more intensely when compared with all my school years. They are “painted” with the most vivid colors. I, still, remember the tasks/projects, a number of arts and crafts and several activities/performances that we used to organize and prepare with our own teacher at the time. I want the same for my pupils.

I would like to be in a position to create the conditions so that my pupils may acquire/live experiences and stimuli which they will be remembered by them for life. I will be one of those teachers who will have to tell/narrate countless stories from trips and daily adventures which in the ears of the children will sound like the adventures of Sindbad the Sailor.

I hope that time itself will operate conversely as far as my profession/work is concerned, so that as much, age-wise, I move away from the years of childhood, that much to come closer/nearer to the psyche and the mind and become a child again. To see and deal with every day as a challenge and to give my personal struggle/fight. In this way, only, I will the teacher who will be remembered by my pupils and, in addition, my own children will admire.

Elli Papadimitropoulou
I do not know how different teacher I will be...but I do know my choice in the “crossroads of education”

As some people say, time is merciless/inexorable. When it comes to the educational reality, however, things are somewhat different. Being a classroom teacher, every single day -by definition- you come into contact, interact and communicate with children, an indisputable fact which makes you a privileged person with regard to a tiny “stealing” vis-à-vis the passing of time, gives you the opportunity to get closer to the youth and in the counting/considering your professional career on the basis of the school years as they go by.

Seeing all this issue, however, from the objective perspective of time, the years go by and I, reluctantly, find myself very near to completing a whole decade as a practicing teacher in the classroom. This very present “call” through the central theme of the HPC to think and imagine myself in the next 30 years or so, I have to confess that it functioned as an enormous challenge, given the fact that such an “exercise” requires a very deep and extensive examination, a meticulous searching into the years that have passed, a knowledge of your real/true professional characteristics and the change or not of those characteristics during all the years that you have been in the teaching profession thus far.

After all these years of teaching I realize that I am not that teacher who from the auditorium of the Faculty of Education found herself in the actual school classroom with 25 children/pupils asking for her to implement/apply in the classroom everything she had been taught during her university (teacher training) studies. It is perfectly clear that the experience you acquire though a variety of circumstances/classroom situations makes you able to manage very differently: all school subjects of the daily schooling, the teaching methods, even the very approach and the ways of communicating that you use with your pupils and their parents.

Undoubtedly, I can’t argue that certain characteristics of any teacher remain unchangeable over time. Having said that, however, I think that it is up to every individual classroom teacher to choose as a contemporary mythical hero/Hercules between the route of “Aretis” and “Kakias”. On the one hand there are the solidly consolidated practices and techniques in his/her daily educational reality which do not necessitate an extra effort on his/her part, but these daily practices -at the same time- very often than not do create a professional and emotional routine. In addition, this daily routine is reinforced by the lack of relativity in
thoughts and ideas on the part of the teacher, even if everything around us is in a state of constant and rapid change.

On the other hand, however, there is this specific “road” which you can choose and develop yourself or, at least, you leave the necessary space so that several changes may be applied and have an impact on your professional characteristics. In addition, you try to “adjust” all your acquired experience through the years in the teaching profession into your character and your personal approach regarding all school issues/matters which daily arise in the actual school/classroom practice. In this case, your professional development, professional development as a continuous process of extending/enriching professional and pedagogical knowledge, enrichment of teaching skills and classroom management, primarily, however, as a process of constructing self-concept and self-realization as a professional who always retrospect/reflects on his/her own work, tries new methods/practices and dares experimentation in his/her daily teaching having a complete/total realization of the consequences of his/her work at both the individual and the collective level (Hargreaves,1994), such a professional development constitutes a continuous learning process, a developmental process until you acquire your professional identity as a teacher. No doubt, we are concerned here with a constant and quite often tiring “situation” which at the end of this process, it will reward the teacher(s) concerned.

In conclusion, then, thirty years down the road from today I do not know how different teacher I will be, but I do know with certainty which “road” I choose in the “crossroads of education.

Elena Fourla
I, the classroom teacher: thirty years later

Yesterday night there was a storm. Holding a cup of tea in my hands and with some music playing on the radio, I sat by the window. As I was looking at the lightning, my mind slipped away to... the future. In my thoughts I couldn’t see the colour of my hair, I couldn’t see the shape of my body but I clearly remember I saw my eyes. They were lively and eager and they were smiling.

‘I got into my classroom, I smiled at my students and I said good morning. We were sitting around forming a big circle. Inside the circle there was a small box that could virtually present an interactive 3D whiteboard. I wasn’t in the middle of the circle, I was always moving around checking the students’ progress or helping when needed.’

Everything seemed familiar but different in so many ways. The teacher in this classroom had the pace of a sixty year old woman, she acknowledged the power of time, she was calm, she wasn’t trying to overcome obstacles. She worked in an open-minded way. She just respected the way things were and she made good use of them. She had a sack full of teaching practices, thoughts and memories collected throughout her teaching career. However, the lively creature that used to sing and dance and laugh 30 years ago wasn’t absent. She was still inspiring her students to express themselves and she was being goofy when she wanted to open the way for their mistakes. Some kind of balance had been achieved.

And then suddenly the sound of a thunder, the smell of my tea and a song ...

Fairytales can come true
It can happen to you
If you’re young at heart
For it’s hard you will find
To be narrow of mind
If you’re young at heart

I don’t know what life will be like in 30 years. I admit that even though I can see our society change day by day, I don’t dare imagine where this change leads. However, I am sure that teaching will always be demanding. Difficult decisions, stress and wrong steps will always be part of the job. The real challenge though, is to manage to cope with them without getting discouraged. So, I believe that if I managed to keep a sack full of all the things that make me love this job and help me be a good teacher, I could grow old staying young ... at heart.

Anastasia Katsapi
Thirty years is a long time to predict how would I stand as a teacher

There is no doubt 30 years is a long time to predict how would I stand as a teacher. I would like to think that financial, social and political reasons will not affect my enthusiasm, and love for teaching. Teaching is my dream job, and I hope my role as a teacher will be evolved through learning new aspects of it and practicing teaching all those years. It is essential for a teacher to inspire the students and motivate them in participating in the process of learning. After years of training, constant practicing and my 30-year-old experience I will be improved as both a person and a teacher. I suppose I will manage to travel all around the world and learn new and different educational systems, methodologies and practices. Having all this knowledge, I will put it into practice for the best result.

The curriculum and syllabus ought to help to adjust the lesson to the personal and educational needs of the learners. The lesson could be designed flexibly to provide learners with meaningful knowledge and experience. Critical thinking should be taught by the teacher while practicing social skills. Learners should be sensitized and be able to behave with respect, cooperation, solidarity and acceptance of the others. Additionally, programs should be applied and adjusted to the needs of students with special abilities and specific learning disabilities.

There is no doubt that technology is continuously developing and will bring significant changes in all the scientific fields. This development is about to bring changes in education too, regarding the methodologies, the technological means and the materials which will be used and applied in the classroom. This variety of the material will make both the process of teaching and the process of learning more exciting and fruitful. Considering the means used during the learning process in the present, one could imagine that the teacher might have numerous applications and material available in the future. This will benefit the learners since they will have the opportunity to communicate, interact and obtain knowledge quick and easy. Due to a large number of refugees escaping into our country, schools are to become multicultural. Learners will interact with learners from other countries. This change is expected to make learners more motivated to meet different cultures and be familiarized with the concept of the different. It is likely that learners will learn to respect learners from other countries without judging someone
by the tribe, complexion, language or culture. Developing social skills, adopting a decent behavior and becoming responsible and active citizens is a crucial aspect of the children's education. Another issue I would like to be different in the future is the role of the teacher. The role of the teacher is consistently in a debate. There are numerous cases that parents intervene in the process of teaching. Teachers and parents should be always in contact and cooperate to achieve their common goal which is the education of the children.

I wish teachers will manage to regain the respect they had and they will be appreciated by parents, the community, and the government.

Athanasia Psychogyiou

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**Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER)**

http://www.atiner.gr/

Greece

The Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER) was established in October 1995 as a non-profit, non-government, non-partisan organization to promote education and research in applied fields. This website provides information on the organizational structure, the mission of the institute and its activities: organization of an annual international conference, elaboration of vocational training programmes, promotion of student exchange programmes, execution of research projects.
I personally admit that my future plans seem rather vague and difficult to define.

“The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts”. - C. S. Lewis

As the educational model evolves, teachers and individuals grow and become more mature. In doing so, I personally admit that my future plans seem rather vague and difficult to define. Having been teaching for over a decade now, I am glad about the changes; maybe even a bit confused. We are not there yet, but I don’t want to insist on the traditional teaching role of the past. Instead, I would rather change some of the old – fashioned patterns that sometimes restrain my spontaneity and limit my potential.

The bad news about being traditional in the future is that past methods of teaching do not work anymore. We need to get past the authoritative teaching figure of the past, teaching classes full of passive students, forget about paper worksheets and the traditional desk work, the chalkboard or the pencil sharpener. (One thing the future teacher should not forget and hopefully will not, in order to be successful, is their passion for teaching.

One point to consider about the future is that we should be more proactive towards involving technology in the classroom. When computers and interactive boards first appeared in classrooms, I was a little apprehensive towards their utilization, but now I have fully realized that there is little sense in ignoring them.

It is obvious that if you do, you may fall behind. I realize that I will probably have to act as an e-teacher, at least partly, a role I would once call a technology junkie or an innovative clown. I understand that in the future I will have to be more open-minded about the use of social media for educational purposes, because students are always keen to participate and become enthusiastic when it comes to social media and technology in general.

Another thing that will probably happen as soon as technology takes over any classroom is that I will have to get rid of papers. The new classroom will mainly be paperless. The stacks of exam papers on my desk will be replaced with data safely stored on my computer. The
assignments will be provided via computer or tablet. Learning about management systems assist greatly towards this direction. There are online grade books and discussion forums that can replace paper worksheets. Innnumerous education applications will help in making the lesson interactive and fun and I will probably need to be more of an ed-tech chameleon. Provided that the average attention span of a student has shrunk from 12 seconds in 2000 to only 8 seconds in 2013 (one second less than that of a goldfish), I will have to plan more interactive lessons and be more involving myself, in order to respond successfully to this phenomenon.

Moreover, one of my wishes would be to get rid of the traditional grade system and mainly focus on formative assessments and real feedback. While education is riding the back of the turtle in Greece, I will be more prone to underestimate benchmarks and grades anymore. The future is the time for meaningful feedback that will not be based on statements like “Did you study?” or “You can do better” lines but actual observation, contemplation and drawing conclusions.

Furthermore, when it comes to technology, teachers are rapidly outdated and this is why the teacher of the future will be more like a student. I will be eager to learn by myself, filter the information given and go on with the essentials. Being suspicious for a while will be also welcome because all this technology trend comes together with its disadvantages too. The teacher of today and tomorrow should know how to handle threats and hazards like cyberbullying.

All in all, I presume that with the right balance of machine and human interaction, there will finally be a net positive for education around the world and both the rest of the teachers and me will still be able to inspire students.

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Katerina Toliou
This is the educator I hope to have become in some years from now.

Since very early on in my childhood years, I have aspired to pursue studies in the field of Primary School Education and by extent, to work as an educator myself. A goal which I take pride in finally having realized. I am presently in the beginning of my career and called upon to describe how I see myself in 20-30 years’ time from today. am confident that, as the years will progress, I will grow in experience at all levels concerning my vocation, so that I can establish myself as an educator as well as provide assistance to my students, to the best of my abilities.

Success will have been achieved when I have mastered the skill of deriving from my students a disciplined conduct as well as gained their full attention, so that they may learn in depth. I also aspire to have built a strong and fruitful relationship with my students, having explored their personalities and individual interests, in an effort to approach them according to their needs, to enable them to express interest in class activities, participate and take initiatives.

On my part, my role in class will be among others, a coordinative one, being responsible of creating an emotionally warm environment by encouraging them to show initiative through perseverance and reward. I am aware of course that as an educator, I will constantly be under pressure and that, more often than not, my students will test the limits of my patience. However, I can then fall back on my experience, acquired over the years, so as to promptly restore order in class once again. The contributive denominators of my being an accomplished educator lay on my knowledge gained during my university years, my personal stance as an educator, the context of the subject lessons- mandatory to be taught as described in the school curriculum and syllabus-and the structure of the school itself I shall be teaching in. On a more personal note, I tend to embrace the words of the famous American philosopher and educator John Dewey who once said: “Education is not preparation for life, education is life itself”. Education is uncompromising, versatile, conflicting and controversial, beautiful and impressive, bold and honest. Above all, it tells the tale of our journey on this planet. For these reasons alone, I hope to have become an educator who will combine not only the teaching of academic knowledge but of values as well. To do so, I must be
able to demonstrate qualities and skills of an educator who understands and listens to her students but also can make herself understood and convey knowledge. To fall back on past knowledge but to be able to incorporate future technologies in the classroom. To be open to criticism and allow myself to learn from my students. To encourage diversity, team work, fair play, initiative and make them understand that they are not citizens of this or the other country but rather citizens of the world. A world which they will inherit and have the chance to improve only through the channels of education.

This is the educator I hope to have become in some years from now.

Eufrosini Konstantatou

OECD (2017)

Developing educational leadership

School leaders in Greece currently have limited responsibilities, and at present new school leaders have little leadership preparation or training. The development of local leadership capacity is needed to support more school autonomy and provide the foundation for giving more responsibilities to school leaders. Strong leaders need well-defined roles and have to be accountable. Local education leaders could play a big role in transforming schools into learning organisations open to engagement with the community, using data to assess performance and learning from others. Effective leadership is linked to educational improvement. Immediately, educational leaders can learn from each other.
Some thoughts about the future with the present as the vehicle...

It is 7:15 in the morning. I am already up for some time now and the morning coffee is steaming in my favorite cup. My bag/purse has been ready from the night before. I look at my hands and I observe that the first wrinkles have made their appearance. It has been a long time...

I am wondering as to how many years have passed by from that specific day during which I was preparing myself for my first day at school as a classroom teacher? Yet, irrespective of the time passed thus far, I feel the same eagerness, the same longing and joy to meet my pupils, like the first time. My pupils who, with their sweet faces, their bright smile and their expressive eyes, look at me full of questions concerning the small and the big “secrets” of knowledge and life itself. My children who have neither (only) the face of my pupils for the current school year nor that of my pupils of the last school year or the face of my pupils when I first start teaching. They are the faces of all children of the world, since the classroom teacher is not simply any professional dealing daily with objects that have no psyche, but he is the professional (the worker) who molds characters, cultivates souls and solidify the foundations of knowledge.

In short, we are concerned here with a professional/public servant who has taken an oath -irrespective of how many years may go by in his career as a teacher- to serve the education sector. He is a visionary equipped with eagerness/zest, smile and patience, the particular characteristics, that is, that I myself was taking care to put into my bag/purse from my very first day in the actual school classroom. Eagerness and “appetite” to overcome every demanding event at school. A smile, so that our common moments with my pupils may be transformed into beautiful experiences. Patience and perseverance, because in order to achieve something good you need time and effort.

Every day is a constant struggle and as the years go by many things change. Every teacher, being part of the society he lives in, changes. No doubt, I was in a constant process of change myself. I was changing the program and whatever I had to teach every time I was feeling the need to do so. I was interchanging techniques and teaching methods in order to keep “alive/active” the interest of my pupils. I was changing the way that I was managing many/different situations and “happenings” in my
classroom. My entire appearance and my “looks” were in a process of change, I was becoming older...

Yet, amidst all those changes, there are a number of things which do remain stable and steady. I remained stable and responsible concerning basic principles and values, thus I, myself, functioning (constituting) as a living example of politeness and consistency, love and respect, values which I was always asking from my pupils to adopt and practice. But, above all, I never did any “discount” concerning my love for all children, this moving power of mine that keeps me on and on in teaching. That, never changed...

I could not forget a very important event that happened during my first years in the teaching profession, a specific event which, perhaps, marked in a catalytic way and determined my carrier as a classroom teacher. Once, during a school day, seeing me to give even myself for my pupils, I remember one of my fellow teachers to whisper to my ear that very soon I would lose my enthusiasm and I would stop dealing/caring that much with the school and the children in it, stop preparing gifts for my pupils, stop sitting with them and spending more time, stop spending most recesses together with my pupils, or stop searching for alternative and interesting activities, stop sacrificing and devoting myself to my daily teaching in a broad sense (in the school and in the classroom). I did not want this to happen. Since then, I confess that I set as an aim of my whole life to refute the above “words” well up to very last day as a teacher in the education sector. Thus, I always try to be close/next to my pupils, to teach and guide them, to inspire and keep company to them, even for a while, as they continue to move forwards in their lives and they keep developing themselves.

As the year go by, however, the body (physically) gets tired, endurances are not the same. What kept me strong and was giving me courage, the certainty and the mental/cognitive clarity and energy to continue fighting both in the present and the future for my pupils, is my propensity to seek for something special, something different, innovative. To be informed about anything new in the Sciences of Education, in didactic and teaching methods, in technology.

What kept strong all these years is this pang that I was feeling every morning when I was getting up from my bed and my heart was fluttering. I will enter my classroom and I will see the bright faces of my pupils! It is 7:15 in the morning. All years to come are, in front of me...

Stamatina Gouma
Foreign Language teaching: thesis and antithesis

Years of teaching English in Greek youngsters

Teachers can have the satisfaction of both scientists and artists in their professional lives. They can have the scientific approach in teaching: careful observation of their learners, experimental attitude in planning lessons and adapting the books, methodology awareness as well as flexibility in changing plans according to their findings.

Teachers can function as artists, since they make alterations in order to fulfill the learners’ needs and think creatively, not slavishly, bound to pattern in planning.

Like art and science, teaching never ends and, therefore, on-going development is the mechanism for learning how to enjoy teaching and its results.

Working with young children is a highly fruitful experience, since they have a great capacity to learn, a great potential for creativity and a passionate commitment to things which interest them. There is almost nothing more exciting for a teacher than a class of involved young children at this age pursuing a learning goal with enthusiasm.

Young learners can respond to meaning even if they do not understand individual words; their understanding comes not just from explanation, but also from what they see and hear; they generally display an enthusiasm for learning and a curiosity about the world around them; they have a need for individual attention and approval from the teacher; they are keen to talk about themselves and respond well to learning that uses themselves and their own lives as main topics in the classroom; they have a limited attention span: unless activities are extremely engaging, they can easily get bored, losing interest after ten minutes or so.

Teachers at this level need to provide a wide variety of learning experiences which encourages their students to get information from a variety of sources. They need to work with their students individually and in groups, developing good relationships.

It is vitally important for teachers to get the “proper” role right when it is required, depending on what we wish the students to achieve. Where some activities are difficult to organise without the teacher acting as controller, others have no chance of success unless we take a less
domineering role. There are times when we need to act as a prompter, where on other occasions, it would be more appropriate to act as a resource. We also have to adopt a number of strategies to prevent problem behaviour from ever occurring, or to deal with it occurs. We need to be able to switch between the various roles, either consciously or subconsciously, we need to able to work and observe simultaneously, listen, watch and absorb, so that we can create the best kind of rapport between ourselves and our students.

Teachers who seek to develop themselves and their practice will benefit both their students and themselves for more than those who by constant and unthinking repetition gradually become less and less engaged with the task of language teaching. Development may be brought by breaking our own teaching rules or worms as a way of challenging what we have taken for granted. It may involve trying out new ideas or changing the ways we use old ones. It may involve investigating some things that puzzles us or we do not know about. But in all these cases, our intention is not only to improve our own performance, but also to learn more about teaching and about ourselves.

Each year or term brings us new groups of students with challenging individual personalities and distinct group dynamics. The best way to teach them is “get involved” and most of us who enjoy teaching may admit that we are still in this field of the highly rewarding feelings we have as a result of this interaction and because we seem to believe that, since we teach children, we shape tomorrow’s world.

Efie Pitterou
Analgesic paradigms for educational amnesty

Instructional innovative practice: The case of second chance schools. An ethnographic study (Ph.D. Dissertation by Levaki, Katerina)

Note: This is a summary of Katerina Levaki's Doctoral Dissertation, formally completed in July 2008 at the University of Crete, Philosophy and Social Studies Dept., under the guidance/supervision of professors P. Pigiaki, G. Flouris and Z. Palios. The particular topic/issue of 'second chance schools', thoroughly investigated by Levaki as part of her doctoral studies, ought to be seen as an extremely interesting area of educational research in Greece today, given the fact that early school leaving (drop-out rates) and illiteracy continue to constitute almost permanent features of our society. In that sense, 'second chance schooling' of any type and orientation may very well signal a promising development not only along educational lines and prospects but, also, at the level social policy intervention in general.

Summary
During the last decade, educational and instructional innovations have been implemented in various countries including Greece, at the national, European and global level. Even though educational and instructional innovations in Greece have not been scarce, their implementation has not always been an easy task, due to a variety of reasons such as the system's bureaucracy, lack of infrastructure, lack of expert personnel, centralization of the educational system as well as other factors.

The situation above provided an impetus for the present study, which was conducted in 2004 and aimed at investigating, through ethnographic methods and techniques, including participant observation and onsite interviews. The goal was to determine whether instructional innovations have been implemented at a "second chance school" in the greater Athens area. This focus is of utmost importance since to this day, no other study has been conducted to assess the claim that innovative practices are indeed operative at this type of school.

The findings of the study revealed only a few instructional innovations at this second chance school. For the most part, the methods and strategies operating at this school were teacher-centred rather than student-centred.
Agonies and ecstasies within the educational liturgy

Improving education and training will boost growth and productivity in Greece

Greece should prioritise investment in education and training and improve the quality of teaching and educational leadership in order to boost medium and long-term growth prospects, according to a new OECD report.

Education outcomes in Greece are close to the OECD average in math, reading and science; however, they have not shown any improvements in the last decade. Particularly in science, Greece has had the strongest decreases among PISA participating countries between 2006 and 2015, in an environment of decreasing public expenditure in education (a 6% decrease between 2014 and 2015).

*Education Policy in Greece: A Preliminary Assessment* analyses the state of education in the country and includes recommendations for improvements. According to the report, additional emphasis should be placed on early childhood education and care, and in directing resources to the neediest schools, says the OECD. In the context of the economic crisis and other immediate pressing difficulties, delegating formal legislative, financial and human resource responsibilities to local actors will need to take place gradually, and be linked to sustained efforts to develop the capacity to exercise new responsibilities.

OECD Chief of Staff and Head of the OECD-Greece Joint Steering Committee, Ms Gabriela Ramos, stressed that “building a first class education system in Greece is the most effective way to strengthen the country’s capacity to promote inclusive growth from within; strengthen its competitiveness; and improve its productivity”. She also explained that “through this project the OECD is working with the Ministry of Education to help them design new measures and frameworks to promote greater school autonomy; develop educational leadership; develop greater assessment and evaluation capacities; and develop all-day schools.”
The Greek Minister of Education, Kostas Gavroglu, whose Ministry has provided full support to the OECD-Greek project from its earliest stages, stated that “there are many challenges to be faced and many problems to be resolved in order for Greek education to return to normality. This report can be a first step towards an effective review of education in Greece, one that would acknowledge the dramatic changes that the economic crisis had in the context of education. There is a need to draw on reliable evidence and data to pursue actionable policy options that would strengthen public education towards an equitable, democratic society.”

This report paves the way for the second phase of the project “Education Policy in Greece: An OECD Review”, which began in April 2017 and will be completed by April 2018. Phase 2 will carry out a deeper analysis and focus on delivering concrete policy recommendations to the Greek government in the following areas: Effective governance; Policies for school improvement; Improving the efficiency, equity and quality of the entire education system; and Addressing the quality, governance and funding of tertiary education.

This collaboration adds to other key projects that the OECD has completed and is currently conducting with the Greek government, and with the support of the European Commission’s Structural Reform Support Service, in the areas of competition and anti-corruption.

Synchronizing teaching theory and school praxis

On the crucial issue of accountability in the existing “overall historical framework” of the Greek education system

Accountability in Greek education: In recent years the notion of “accountability” is increasingly being used in public policy debates, in particular with regard to higher education, but less so with regard to lower levels of education or other public services and organizations. Accountability concerns academic goals, student achievement and staff performance but also administrative efficiency and the handling of financial affairs. In the case of Greek education there are no such accountability processes set and implemented, as there are no strategic plans (institutional or national), no national standards, no short term and long term goals and objectives of educational or other public organizations, no action and operational plans. Statistical data are rudimentary and incomplete.

Available data are not used to evaluate, make plans or improve the state of affairs. The whole system works as an idle wheel. In the highly centralized Greek education system, where policy responsibility lies primarily with central governmental authorities (Ministry, central ministerial agencies), part of the accountability procedure takes place in the Parliament (e.g. via parliamentary questions and interpellations) where the state’s executive is set under the democratic control of the legislature. These parliamentary procedures, however, are mired in party politics and are often used to expose and generally blame the Government rather than effectively hold accountable those responsible. The authority of audit institutions, such as the Court of Audit or the General Inspector of Public Administration is limited and often curtailed. The Court of Audit inspects solely the legality of financial transactions while the General Inspector’s decisions are often subject to the support of the government. Union and social organizations can also exercise democratic control. However, the role and influence of social
organizations in the Greek state policies is a controversial issue. On the one hand they are necessary.

The fact that statistical data are not extensively used to formulate and implement policy in education in Greece is reflected in the lack and incompleteness of data collected and published by international organizations (European Union, OECD, UNESCO). For example, a recent question raised by two MPs concerned the extensive damages on the buildings of the National Technical University of Athens, caused by protesters who clashed with the riot police on the anniversary of November 17th, 1973 student uprising. After the 2015 reversals of reforms, the international pressure by Greece’s creditors to reform and modernize the Greek education system has increased. Specifically, the Memorandum of Understanding for a three-year ESM program, signed in August 2015 by Greece and its European Union creditors, provides that Greece commits to prepare an Education Action Plan and to implement evaluation in all levels of education. The first review of the program has taken note of the reversals of previous reforms in education. In the context of the ongoing second review of the program the government has announced that it is going to introduce a self-evaluation process of school units for the next academic year (2017-2018) and a new process for the evaluation and selection of school and education system administrators. It has also announced that it will expand autonomy of schools. None of the models for evaluation proposed to date has been accepted by teachers, reflecting a lack of trust in the public administration system. All governmental attempts have been faced with the opposition of teachers and their unions. Nor did the foundation of ADIPPDE, as an independent public authority responsible to organize and supervise self-evaluation of schools and the evaluation of teachers, prove sufficient to build trust. Representatives of the teachers unions have been asked and participated as consultants in the preparation of legislation by different governments and ministers of education but their resistance has not been bent. As the Annual Report of ADIPPDE notes, teachers’ unions ‘have in the past expressed their objections against draft laws or legislation for the evaluation in education.'
Masked Attackers Storm Greek University Lecture

A group of about 10 hooded assailants stormed a class at the University of Piraeus on Thursday and threw paint at the lecturer. The incident occurred during a lecture by Professor Mary Bosi at the Department of International Studies. The hooded assailants disappeared.

Bosi sought to downplay the attack saying that it was a minor incident and should not be exaggerated. However, the governing SYRIZA party issued a statement condemning the attack and claiming that such incidents “undermine the public nature of education and pave the way to authoritarianism”.

Incidents of violent attacks and vandalism at Greek universities are common, with critics claiming the government is turning a blind eye to leftist and anarchist extremists.

Greek, Chinese Universities to Build Tai Chi Center in Attica

Greek and Chinese universities are to join forces to set up a special health center near Athens. The University of Western Attica and the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine have signed an agreement to establish a Tai Chi Health Center which will open in September.

The Greek Tai Chi Health Center will also offer qigong and acupuncture training courses for health professionals, as well as courses on Chinese and Greek culture. Among its goals is the combining of traditional Chinese medicine and philosophy with the principles of Modern (Western) medicine. A long-term objective is the creation of an integrated postgraduate-study program at the Tai Chi Health Center.

Six Greek Universities Rank Among World’s Top 500

The Metsovio Polytechnic of Athens (National Technical University of Athens) has been ranked 124th in the Engineering and Technology category of the QS list of the best 500 universities in the world.
Five more Greek universities appear on the list, including the Kapodistrian University of Athens (ranked between 302nd and 392nd in five categories) and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (ranked between 222nd and 330th in five categories). Patras University, the University of Crete and the Economic University of Athens were included in two categories with rankings from 293rd (Economic University) to 500th.
The six Greek universities appeared 57 times in the 48 ranking lists.

**Athens Prosecutor to Probe College Crime Wave**

Greek prosecutors are to get involved in a developing scandal about allegations of violence, vandalism and general criminality plaguing some of the country’s universities.

Athens Prosecutor’s Chief Prosecutor Elias Zagoras is reportedly to start a preliminary investigation into reports of lawlessness on college campuses.

On Tuesday, National Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPA) Deputy Professor Manos Stephanidis sent an open letter to the Dean of the School of Economics, Thanos Dimopoulos, complaining of criminal activities and lawlessness on campus.

In it, Stephanidis hit out at alleged robberies and assaults against students and professors, an exchange of gunfire outside a student dormitory, an armed robbery at an ATM plus the stabbing of a student.

Politically, too, the issue has drawn the ire of main opposition leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis who promised via Twitter that he would put an end to vandalism in Greek universities, if New Democracy wins the next election.

**Professor Complains of Rampant Criminal Activity in University of Athens Campus**

National Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPA) Deputy Professor Manos Stephanidis sent an open letter to the Dean of the School of Economics, Thanos Dimopoulos, complaining of criminal activities and lawlessness on campus.

Stephanidis complains of a number of incidents at the Zografou campus, such as robberies and assaults against students and professors, exchange of gunfire outside a student dormitory, an ATM robbery under the threat of a revolver, the stabbing of a student with a knife, and appeals to university authorities to intervene and assume their responsibilities.
Minister: No teacher shortages
Education Minister Marietta Giannakou dismissed claims by teachers’ union groups yesterday that the school year has started off with thousands of vacant teaching positions. “When the vacancies arise, this occurs because of illness or due to other causes. The Education Ministry has secured from the Finance Ministry the necessary funds for replacements,” Giannakou said. The government is facing protest action from preschool, primary and secondary school teachers who are seeking the hiring of more staff as well as pay hikes. Further tension arose with unions yesterday when university professors failed to appear before a parliamentary committee on education in order to submit their views on the proposed changes. The Panhellenic Federation of teaching and Scientific Personnel (POSDEP), the university teachers’ union, said in a note sent to the committee that the reforms do not provide for free state tertiary education.

Finding money for education
Government spokesman Theodoros Roussopoulos told the press yesterday that the first installment of the state benefit to primary and pre-school teachers will put an additional 54-million-euro strain on the 2007 budget. “Do you think that money is just peanuts for Greece’s taxpayers?” Roussopoulos asked. Considering the economy’s dismal state, the government cannot give away any money –not even that 54 million euros– without serious consideration. Nevertheless, two months ago the conservative administration went on to spend some 100 million euros to keep a troubled Thessaloniki pesticide factory afloat. The question is, how the government can come up with funds to subsidize a bankrupt industry and, at the same time, fail to find money to finance the country’s education system? The government was elected with a clear mandate to curb waste, which according to ruling party estimates hovers at 10 billion per year. This is not graft and corruption. It is also money going down the tubes. Instead of increasing state waste by doing something such as subsidizing inefficient industries, our political leaders should be more generous in covering the needs of Greek education, which they often say it is the country’s future. Sure, the government does...
not have to meet the over-the-top demands of the teachers' federation. But it could at least invest the same amount that went to the troubled pesticide company.

**EU criticizes Greek education**
The Greek education sector is in need of fundamental reform, the European commissioner for education said yesterday, as EC figures showed that a large proportion of Greek students attend universities abroad.

“The higher education sector in Greece is still in need of essential reforms in educational curricula, funding and governance,” Jan Figel said yesterday in response to a question by New Democracy Euro Deputy Costis Hadjidakis. “The changes must be carried out through the coordinated action of all sides involved in the process,” Figel added.

Meanwhile, a Commission report revealed that 8.5 percent of Greek higher education students attended foreign universities in 2002-2003. This figure is nearly triple the EU average of 2.9 percent of students attending universities abroad. On the other hand, only 2.2 percent of the students at Greek universities are foreigners, as opposed to a 6.2 percent EU average.

“The current system is not only off-putting to foreigners wanting to study in this country but it is also unwelcoming to Greeks,” Hadjidakis said.

The Euro MP also remarked upon the hefty bill incurred by parents sending their children to Greek universities. At 1.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), it is among the steepest in the EU.

**One in three feels bullied at school**
One in three primary school pupils claims to have been the victim of violence and one in ten admits to bullying a fellow pupil at school, according to the results of a study by the National Center for Social Research (EKKE) made public yesterday. EKKE’s study showed also that two in 10 schoolchildren claimed to have been the victim of sexual harassment at school. Commenting on the findings, Education Minister Marietta Giannakou remarked: “Greek schools must face challenges that did not exist in the past. School cannot replace the family but it is in position to deal with issues related to the shaping of the child’s personality. Giannakou said that 43 ‘counseling stations’ for victims of school violence were being set up, stressing the ministry’s aim was to establish one such unit in each of the country’s 55 prefectures. The study also showed that six in 10 teachers had noticed that newcomers, those
with problems fitting in or who are ‘different’ in any way are often the targets of violence. The same study also showed that more than three-quarters (77%) of schoolchildren claimed to have witnessed instances of violence in their schoolyard.

No mobile masts near schools
A Health Ministry decision, yet to be made public, dictates that mobile phone aerials should not be erected within 500 meters of school buildings due to health concerns. The decision elaborates upon a law passed earlier this year –keeping mobile aerials at least 300 meters from schools - and is in direct objection to a Transport Ministry bill that foresees the lifting of such restrictions. According to the Health Ministry, there should be at least 500 meters between schools and mobile phone masts and other potential health risks, such as high-voltage electricity pylons. The distance can be reduced to 200 meters in densely populated urban areas. The bill in question “is attempting to impose the interests of the mobile phone firm cartel and to bypass legal barriers and the reactions of citizens and local authorities”, said Costas Diakos, a lawyer representing protesting Attica citizens and municipalities. According to the four main mobile phone firms in Greece, the restrictions imposed on Greek firms are significantly stricter than other European countries.

Greeks doubt value of degree
Four in 10 Greeks believe that a university degree does not help job seekers secure employment, while contacts/connections and good appearance rank among the most important qualities an aspiring candidate should have, according to the results of a survey published yesterday. The survey commissioned by ‘Kathimerini’ (daily news-paper), found that 14 percent replied that studies do not help much in securing work, while 26 percent said that they don’t help at all. Only 13 percent said that the level of education that a job candidate possessed “helped a lot”. With national jobless figures just below 10 percent, Greece has one of the highest unemployment rates in the European Union. Economists have pointed to structural rigidities in the economy as contributing to keeping jobless queues long despite recent years of strong economic growth.
The central theme of this issue

“Imagine/ see/ think of yourself being (still) a practicing classroom teacher 20 -25 - 30 years down the road

Although nobody may be certain as to what the future “holds/reserves” for him -both personally and professionally-at any point in time, it is, nonetheless, quite interesting -if not challenging for the present day “routine”- to attempt a tentative exploration along such lines. Who does not like (or wish…) to be able to have a first-hand and “reliable” picture of the future in general, of his own future in particular! In the final analysis, imagination and imagining is totally “free”, let alone constructive and useful -under, of course, the appropriate conditions and “prerequisites”…

Thus been the case in the present context of the so-called “central theme” of the HPC, let us advance this cursive discussion a little further by focusing on the classroom teacher and his own portraying of his future personal and professional “status” embarking upon his imagination and/or “foreseeing”.

Within this vein of “argument”, as a matter of fact, this type of highly heuristic exercise would appear even more interesting if someone could “ask” the classroom teacher on how he “sees and/or imagines” his future as a practicing school teacher a couple of decades down the road.

L.C.B.